
Title: History of Richard 3

Author: Beowulf Thormear

Chapter Four- Torturous
Past

“On this day, you have
all passed your tests to
become sword masters of
the Way. Many of your
friends have perished in
this training, and many
more of you shall perish
in future engagements.
Dawn your blades and
begin a day of
concentration, after which
you will be required to
fashion your own suit of
armor using shadow iron
mined by your own hands.
Complete these simple
tasks and report to the
barracks when you are
finished for combat
orders and stationing.” A
monotone Zealots voice
drifted over a group of
twenty teenagers
assembled in a small
clearing of forest. A
young child of no more
then 9 years stood
amongst the crowd,
standing more then a
foot shorter then the
rest of his companions.

“Richard, Keil. You two
stay behind.” The voice
of the Zealot was
suddenly stiff and piercing
as the two friends
stopped in mid motion,
watching the rest of
their companions exit into
the dense woodlands.

“Richard, your father
has sent me specific

orders. You are not to receive your passing ceremony, you are not finished your training yet.” The man spoke in a harsh tone directed at the child, almost grinning as he saw the shocked look on the child’s face as the announcement was made.

“Alongside these orders, he also gave me specific orders for you. He wishes you to be grateful that he has allowed you to progress upon the path of the master. He believes it will take your life, as it has every other student for the past hundred years. If by chance you pass the test, he shall greet you as his rightful son. The Zealot spoke once again in a monotone voice, as if reciting words placed in his mouth by a droning diplomat.

“Now for homage to your father... he asks that you slay your friend. He cannot have you splitting allegiance to a mere child and himself, your father must be the only one you confide in. You must draw your blade now and end his life without hesitation, anything less and I am instructed to kill you where you stand.” The Zealot spoke in an almost pleasurable tone as he fingered his blade, eyeing the shocked child and his equally shocked companion.

“For my father.” The child drew his blade in one fluid action, and thrust forward while looking into his friends pleading eyes, ending the

boy's life mercilessly.

The zealot burst into a loud roaring laughter as the older boys form slipped from the younger child's blade. "Excellent! I expected nothing less from you Richard. Report to your sleeping quarters immediately, pack up your belongings and throw them into the sea. Where you are going there shall be no sleep, no friends, no comforting items, only yourself and death. I shall look forward to planting your ashes young one." The Zealot turned away leaving a young boy looking down at the twisted corpse of his best friend, not seeing the tears that streamed forth from the child's eyes as he collapsed to the ground in despair.

Chapter Five- Trial by Fire

A lone child stood faithfully in the center of a burning gauntlet, white hot fires poured fourth from the lava-like rock that lined the primordial flooring of the volcano interior.

The child stood with eyes closed, feet planted firmly upon the molten ground, shaking as sweat poured from his now tanned features. A blackened figure in the corner of the room eyed the child intensely as he muttered subtle curses, trying to thwart the young boy's attention.

It had been two hours and already Richard began to tire. His concentration would not hold and the

burning rock would melt
his skin and turn his
flesh to ash. His father
knew this, and that is
why he was here now, he
was here to die. The
Zealot Terangal stood in
the far corner, untouched
by the more intense heat,
while he muttered loud
curses into the fiery air,
doing his best to break
the child's concentration.
The test of the master
was an ancient rite to
determine the Way's
master swordsman, the
one who would teach
several generations of
future soldiers in the
arts of the sword. In the
end it didn't matter,
Richard would die, and his
father would live
peacefully in the fact
that his child was weak,
a pup to be thrown from
the litter. He couldn't
let that happen, he would
remember what they did
to Keil. Keil... why did
he kill him? The question
floundered through his
thoughts as the heat of
the flames began to leave
sickly black patterns upon
his skin.

Terangal's voice began to
rise louder, the Zealot
had seen the child's skin
begin to give way to
defeat, he knew it was
only a matter of time
before the child was
consumed entirely. The
heat of the volcano
suddenly flared, scorching
the back of the child,
sending ripples of laughter
surging through Terangal's
body. The Zealot began to
stride with confident
steps toward the now
spastically shaking child,
making sure not to
accidentally step in the
searing hot lava that

waited below. Terangal
hopped to a rock beside
the child with surprising
grace, dancing past the
flames, dodging the sudden
spurts of fire that shot
up from the volcano.
Looking straight into
Richards closed eyes,
Terangal began to shout
louder curses, seeing the
boy flinch and twitch as
more of his flesh began
to burn.

Richard felt on the verge
of tears as the
determined Zealot burned
him with words, mirroring
the flames which joined
in with the Zealots
aggressive onslaught.
Thoughts of Keil flooded
his mind; his friend would
be watching him now and
laughing, waiting to return
the torture in death that
Richard had inflicted upon
him in life. Richard's
thoughts began to drift
to the day at the ocean,
the month before he had
been forced to take his
friends life... the
ocean...so calming.... he
had seen the blue of his
eyes reflected back at
him as his figure twisted
and moved in the flowing
waves. His form had
changed in the illusionary
watery mirror; the waves
reflected a child, innocent
face and glowing eyes,
rustled hair and dirty
clothing, not a murderer,
not a monster. Richard's
eyes suddenly opened,
staring at the cursing
Zealot in a newfound
determination. The child
of his father could not
live through this day...
but he could, he had the
strength. It did not come
from endless years of
training, it did not come
from his father's blood

which flowed through his
veins, it came from him,
and he was stronger than
anything they could have
imagined he would be.

With a quick motion,
Richard brought his foot
out, sweeping the Zealots
shins, sending Terangal
face first into the
molten pool that seemed
to welcome the Zealots
flesh with dancing arms,
locking him into a fiery
embrace. Terangal
screamed curses, as he
tried in vain to move his
now blackened flesh from
the encasing molten rock,
the Zealot had been
undone by a child. The
thought sickened him as
the warm fires of death
extinguished his form.

The ocean sat below him,
its waves crashed upon
the shores in a rhythmic
tune of serenity, no
flames or searing rock
could touch him here, he
was all alone, he was at
peace.